

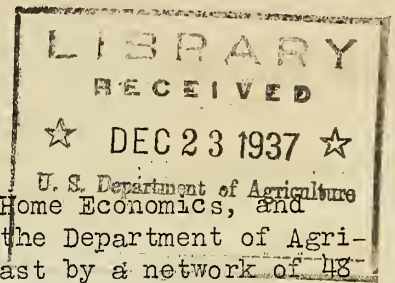
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

A Look at Laundry Equipment



A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Morse Salisbury, Office of Information, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, December 16, 1937.

MR. SALISBURY:

Here we are around to Thursday again -- home economics day. And here again is Ruth Van Deman ready to report on what's new in the Bureau of Home Economics. Ruth, the air is yours for --

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Don't let the Christmas spirit run away with you, Morse.

MR. SALISBURY:

No danger. The air is yours for 10 minutes.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

O.K. I can say a lot in 10 minutes. Morse, do you belong to the S.P.C.H.E?

MR. SALISBURY:

The what?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

The S.P.C.H.E.

MR. SALISBURY:

Society -- for Prevention --

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Of Cruelty -- yes --

MR. SALISBURY:

To Home Economists.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

No. Household Equipment. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Household Equipment.

MR. SALISBURY:

Oh, sure. I joined at a very early age.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

But this is a new society, Morse.

MR. SALISBURY:

That's what you think. As a matter of fact there were sub rosa chapters in existence over 30 years ago -- at least in Eldorado, Kansas, to my personal knowledge.

(over)

MISS VAN DEMAN:

So?

MR. SALISBURY:

Yes, the household broom was responsible for my joining.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

The broom?

MR. SALISBURY:

I felt so sorry for the broom I could hardly bear to sweep the front steps.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh, I see. And so sorry for the wringer that you could hardly bear to turn it on wash day.

MR. SALISBURY:

Sure. Those old gears did grind when I didn't give 'em oil enough.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

And how your mother did scold when you gave 'em too much oil, and it got on the clean white clothes.

MR. SALISBURY:

I don't remember about that.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I remember one time I got hold of the oil can. I thought if a little was good, more was better. What a mess.

MR. SALISBURY:

Well, those pains of our childhood have gone where the woodbine twineth. I understand the new power washers and wringers have enclosed gears.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, the manufacturers are doing all they can to make their machines fool-proof. But we still have a lot to learn about choosing and using machines.

MR. SALISBURY:

That why you're reviving the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Household Equipment?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I'm not really the reviver, Morse. I just picked up that idea the other day from something I was reading on the care of mechanical devices. This writer was contending that we have to replace the cords and plugs on electric irons oftener than need be, if we just handled them better. So when our new laundry bulletin came from the printer the other day --

MR. SALISBURY:

Another new bulletin, Ruth?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Practically new. It has the old title - "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering." But Miss Holbrook has rewritten all the part on equipment, to cover the new types of power washing machines and wringers, and spinner driers ---

MR. SALISBURY:

Spinner driers? Same thing as extractors?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Same thing. A number of the electric washing machines are now equipped with a spinning basket that whirls the water out by centrifugal force and leaves the clothes "damp dry." Some machines are so arranged that you can wash, rinse, and extract the water from the clothes all in the same tub.

MR. SALISBURY:

Quite a long jump from our old wringer fastened to the side of a galvanized iron tub.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Quite. Now there are so many of these machines for doing the washing and ironing that a woman is sometimes a bit confused to know which to buy. So Miss Holbrook has gone right down the line, listing the different types and giving the points to watch for in each.

MR. SALISBURY:

For example.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

There are three types of electric washing machines -- the cylinder, the vacuum cup, and the agitator. Naturally being a Government agency we don't talk about them under their trade names. But in choosing any kind of a washing machine, you want to check on its performance and capacity, its operating cost, and its safety.

MR. SALISBURY:

The dealer of course knows the capacity --

MISS VAN DEMAN:

The manufacturer indicates the correct load for every machine he makes. A medium size home washer holds from 5 to 8 pounds of dry clothes. That's about 5 to 8 single cotton sheets. If you overload a washer it's hard on the clothes and hard on the machine.

MR. SALISBURY:

Cruelty to household equipment.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Exactly.

MR. SALISBURY:

I suppose the water capacity is indicated also.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes. It's just as important to check on the water capacity as the clothes capacity. On the farm especially sometimes water runs short.

MR. SALISBURY:

And that isn't only when there's a drought.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

No, worse luck. Well, some machines take more water than others and yet wash no more efficiently. And each machine has its cleansing time -- the number of minutes you should run it to wash the load of clothes.

Then there's the question of good framework - steel, well braced and welded. And with no sharp edges to cut the fingers or tear the clothing.

MR. SALISBURY:

A safety precaution. And so of course is electrical insulation.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh my yes. If the electrical parts aren't thoroughly insulated, the electric current will leak off to the ground through the body of the machine. And anyone touching it might get a very nasty shock.

MR. SALISBURY:

Especially dangerous when the hands are wet.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

As they generally are on wash day. Then it's well to look at the written guarantee on the electric connections and wiring. It should state clearly how long they are good for. Then it's only fair for the user of the machine to have new cords put in when that time limit is up.

MR. SALISBURY:

Safety first, again.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes. Worn out electric wiring is likely to cause short circuits and blow out fuses.

MR. SALISBURY:

As I know from sad experience.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Well, those are just a few of the things a member of the S.P.C.H.E. thinks about when she buys and uses an electric washer. Now the new style ironing machines --

MR. SALISBURY:

Mangles?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

They don't seem to be called that very much any more. Mangle doesn't give the right idea of the finished ironing that the new machines turn out. You know there's a presser type and a rotary type.

MR. SALISBURY:

Presser type? Something like those padded affairs the dry cleaner uses for pressing men's suits?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That's it. Two padded metal boards. The upper one is heated and works on a hinge. It clamps down on the lower board like a great big hot iron.

MR. SALISBURY:

And the rotary type. I suppose there you just feed the clothes into rollers?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Between a padded roller and a heated shoe. Here again of course the machine must be shock proof, and the electrical parts thoroughly insulated. Also for safety there must be a way to stop the machine instantly and release the pressure, in case the clothing or the fingers get caught.

MR. SALISBURY:

Ruth, do you think it pays the average home to have one of these ironing machines?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That's a good Scotch question, Morse. The answer depends of course on how much ironing there is to do. And whether there's a good, cheap, commercial laundry service to be had. The same is true if you're buying a washing machine. It pays to check up on all that, before buying any of this power equipment.

MR. SALISBURY:

Yes, of course. That's the sensible way to figure it.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

But it's different with an electric iron. Every household needs one of them. That is of course every household with electricity laid on, as the British say.

MR. SALISBURY:

I've heard that some women even carry an electric iron around with 'em when they travel.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Some do, but I'm not one of them. But I do want a good safe electric iron handy where I live. The newer types have a number of safety devices.

MR. SALISBURY:

Automatic shut-off?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Automatic shut-off to keep it from getting too hot. And an adjustable switch so you can set it for the heat you want. Some models have a permanently attached cord coming out of the side of the iron. That does away with the plug at the back of the handle. And the cord doesn't get so tangled up with the clothes on the ironing board. Also for the old style cords there are special attachments that hold the cord up out of the way.

MR. SALISBURY:

These inventors are always just one step ahead of us. Ruth, you almost make me want to go out and buy one of those irons for a Christmas present.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Such was not my intention, Morse. But I can think of Christmas presents a lot less useful.

I can see by the look in your eye the 10 minutes are up. Clock eyed? Here's the laundry bulletin if you want to repeat the title. And I'll be saying good-bye until next Thursday.

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